

***Division of Public Defender Services  
State of Connecticut***

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**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTINE RAPILLO  
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DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES**

**COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
APRIL 5, 2013**

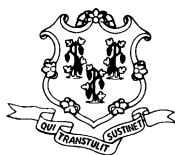
**RAISED BILL 6682, AN ACT CONCERNING COLLABORATION BETWEEN BOARDS OF  
EDUCATION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL**

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports passage of **Raised Bill 6682, An Act Concerning Collaboration between Boards of Education and Law Enforcement Personnel**. This proposal would require that schools and law enforcement agencies adopt policies or enter in to memorandum of agreements outlining the role of police in schools. Municipalities that are considering placing police officers permanently in school should do so in a thoughtful manner. While the presence of armed police officers make many people feel safer, past practice has shown that there have been unintended consequences in districts that have long had a police presence in schools. Studies have shown that the presence of law enforcement officials as a regular part of school personnel increased the number of arrests in schools. Most of these arrests are not for the violent, threatening activity that is intended to be prevented by the police. The vast majority of the arrests were for behavior that would traditionally be dealt with by school discipline plans if the police were not present. A study published by the Justice Policy Institute in 2011 found that schools with a police officer had a five times higher arrest rate for crimes such as disorderly conduct.<sup>1</sup>

**Raised Bill 6682** would require that Boards of Education and law enforcement officials spell out the expectations for the school based officers and establish a disciplinary procedure for the schools that indicates where law enforcement involvement should take place. This bill is based on a number of programs that are already in place across Connecticut. The Office of Policy and Management, through the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, used federal grant money to create a model

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<sup>1</sup> "Education Under Arrest: The Case Against Police in Schools" Justice Policy Institute, November 2011



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Memorandum of Agreement (MMOA) between schools and law enforcement. The MMOA spells out the school disciplinary policy and lets the school staff know when law enforcement involvement is appropriate and when regular school discipline should be used. The Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance (CTJJA) has worked to help communities form collaborations between law enforcement, juvenile courts and the schools to implement model behavior policies and to work together to find the most effective ways to enhance school discipline without sacrificing safety. These programs have been implemented in Manchester, Windham and Stamford. Hartford and Bridgeport have a MMOA and Waterbury has also begun to explore the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The CTJJA issued a report outlining all the efforts to enhance collaboration to improve school climate and discipline in a report issued in February, 2013. <http://www.ctjja.org/resources/pdf/CTJJA-AdultDecisions-WhitePaper.pdf>

These policies have been proven to reduce the number of unnecessary arrests in schools without sacrificing safety. Police are in the schools to provide protection and education and are not used as a substitute for normal school discipline. Passage of Raised Bill 6682 will mandate that all schools have an agreement on how law enforcement will operate within the policies and procedures of the schools. This is an effective, low cost way to ensure that our schools are promoting a climate conducive to education. The Office of Chief Public Defender urges this Committee to favorably report on this proposal.